

**DEDICATED TO OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PROFESSION AND EACH OTHER**

**Fall 2011**

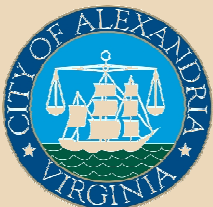


9-11 Ten Years Later	1
Stay Calm, Stay Alive	2
Fire News	3
EMS News	4
Complacency	5
Supporting the Alexandria Fire Department	6
Community Engagement	7
Fire Administration and Support Services	14
Awards and Recognition	16
Statistics	17
Hot Shots	18

Alexandria Fire Department  
900 Second Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703.746.5200

*This newsletter is written and compiled by:*  
Chief Fire Marshal Bob Rodriguez  
PIO / Community Services Officer

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# THE RESPONDER

## 9-11, Ten Years Later

On September 11, the City and the Country paused to remember the events of ten years ago and the sacrifices made by so many on that day. In Alexandria many of us still remember where we were and what we were doing as the events of September 11 unfolded before our eyes. While we watched in disbelief as the Twin Towers burned on television, many of our public safety employees and everyone who lived and worked in the Washington Metropolitan area had their reality abruptly changed when American Airlines flight 77 smashed into the side of the Pentagon at 9:37 am. Our Department quickly sprung into action, devoting significant resources to the initial incident and the subsequent recovery activities that went on for a week after.

For the first time that most AFD employees could remember, a total recall of all AFD personnel was initiated. Several employees on vacation stopped what they were doing, grabbed the last rental car available and drove across the country to re-join AFD and our Northern Virginia partners to address terrorism on our home turf. Many worked 12 or more hour shifts for days at a time, returning to the Pentagon each day to continue

the efforts of recovery and stabilization after the fires had long since been extinguished.

In the weeks, months and years following those attacks, the Department and the City changed. The Department changed the way we viewed our community, our jobs as first responders and our roles in fire prevention and education. As a Department and a City we initiated improved



Fire Chief Adam Thiel addresses a crowd at City Hall during the City's 9-11 Tenth Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony.

plans to address what were once hypothetical situations that had become all so real. The Department and the City acquired and expanded its resources to address future challenges from terrorism as well as other natural and man-made disasters. As a Department, we expanded our hazardous materials and technical rescue capabilities to address future acts of terrorism as well as our normal calls for service. As a City, we created the Office of Emergen-

cy Management and staffed it with a variety of experts who guide us and work with us on training and active management of both man-made and natural disasters. We increased our level of training in a variety of subjects related to terrorism and mass casualty disasters.

And while we are better prepared than we were 10 years ago, there is much more work to do as a City and as a Department to be prepared in this rapidly expanding and changing world that we live in. Our preparedness is an ongoing exercise which continues to evolve and adapt to our world around us which changes and requiring more resources and capabilities.

Fire Chief Adam Thiel summed up in his remarks at the City's 10th Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony for September 11, ten years later "...Rest assured, that if you call 9-1-1 on 9/11, or 9/12, or 9/13 or any other day; that we will respond, 24/7/365. No matter the threat, no matter the challenge, we will be there; for the next ten years, and the next ten years after that, and ten years beyond that. And we shall never forget." **Never Forget** 🚒

## Stay Calm, Stay Alive

By Captain Dan McMasters

The idea that staying calm under pressure will improve performance is not new, but scientific advancements are helping to explain how this idea becomes reality. Researchers are learning more and more about how the body reacts to potential threats or stressors. Groundbreaking research is allowing them to develop useful techniques to help recognize potentially dangerous effects of stress reactions, while taking advantage of the potential benefits these reactions bring to the body. Those who operate in dangerous and stressful situations can find themselves at the mercy of the physiological reac-



tions occurring in their bodies, if they are not prepared to overcome them.

In response to a perceived threat, the body will release hormones that prepare it for the violent muscular activity that accompanies the “fight or flight” response; heart rate increases, breathing rate increases, and some routine functions such as digestion and salivation are suspended. Once the body has entered this “fight or flight” phase, the ability to make safe and rational decisions can be severely limited. If the response reaches a panic level, any subsequent action taken will be

purely instinctual with no conscious thought or planning possible. If the proper and safe response to threats is not pre-programmed and part of an unconscious muscle memory, the chances of survival can be greatly reduced.

Physiological responses of this type can make firefighters do such irrational things as standing up to run in a superheated environment, or ripping off the SCBA mask when they feel they aren't getting enough air. Many firefighters have been injured and killed because they were not trained and conditioned to respond properly in life-threatening circumstances. Unfortunately, once this level of physiological response is reached it is extremely difficult to manage or control, which can leave members unable to deal with the threat that triggered the response in the first place.

Understanding how unsafe it can be to make critical decisions and carry out tactics while operating in a “fight or flight” state, members must take steps to reduce the likelihood of those responses during emergency incidents. Training, education, and exposure to potentially threatening situations and conditions will develop a level of familiarity that will keep physiological threat responses within manageable levels. In other words, the more familiar and comfortable a member is in threatening environments, the less likely it is that the member will panic or make poor decisions.

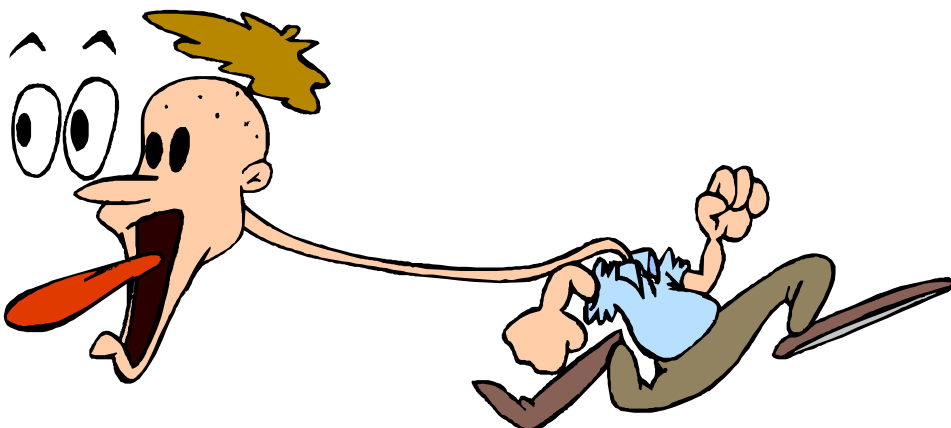
Even with good preparation and training, members may still encounter situations or conditions that trigger “fight or flight” responses. No matter what the situation brings, members must always maintain an “external focus” in which they constantly evaluate the environment for survival and task performance information. Members who turn their focus inward to their own feelings, emotions, or discomfort will almost certainly miss important size-up clues and will be unlikely to carry out tasks safely or effectively.

In order to reduce the impact of physiological responses and to maintain an external focus, members should use the following techniques to help maintain their composure:

### **Response Control**

When fight or flight responses begin, members can often feel the increase in heart rate and breathing while still largely maintaining control. At this point they should consciously begin to slow their breathing rate as a way to control this growing response. Deep breaths with long exhales will simulate the bodies state of rest and will increase the oxygen level to the brain, which aids decision-making. Because the feelings of anxiety and panic are often too powerful to control through breathing alone, this techniques must be accompanied by one or more additional control techniques.

**SEE ALIVE, PAGE 8, COL. 1.**





## Fire News

The lyrics from the R.E.M. song **It's the End of the World** summed up August 23rd perfectly "That's great, it starts with an earthquake...." While it wasn't the end of the world, the 5.8 magnitude earthquake took many off guard. It started at 1:51pm in Mineral, Virginia but the quake was felt all along the East Coast and up into parts of Canada. In Alexandria it took several moments for people to realize they were experiencing an earthquake. Shortly afterward, people evacuated buildings and others called 9-1-1. The Department quickly moved all apparatus outside every fire station and requested inspections of all facilities prior to moving personnel and equipment back inside. Emergency equipment was dispatched to a number



One of the damaged chimneys at Gadsby's Tavern after the earthquake.

Source: alexandriava.gov

of medical calls, mainly panic attack related. The Fire Department Operations Center was activated and units were up-staffed in anticipation of after shocks. Fire apparatus began driving throughout the City doing windshield damage surveys. In the end there was no major damage to structures. Many older buildings suffered damage to chimneys and brick facades. City Hall suffered the collapse of a wall in one of the central court yards that resulted in a closure of a portion of the building until repairs could be made. Gadsby's Tavern also suffered structural damage to their chimneys which required the closing of the 100 block of North Royal Street. Fire units dealt with a large number of townhouses in one block in

Old Town where several water pipes had burst, flooding a number of basements. After 24 hours, the department returned staffing to normal levels, however, Mother Nature had more in store for Alexandria.

On August 26 AFD staff were back in an up-staffing mode as the City prepared for the arrival of Hurricane Irene. The Fire Operations Center was activated on August 26 and remained in service through Sunday, August 28, coordinating and updating the City Emergency Operations Center that had been activated to deal with this major weather event. Fire and EMS units were increased in staffing and ready to handle emergencies during the hurricane event. A Swift Water Rescue Team was brought in from Loudoun County and positioned at Fire Station 209 in the event swift water assets were needed.

In the end, Alexandria was spared a major weather event. Hurricane Irene arrived but with much less power than expected. By Sunday afternoon, staffing and City operations returned to normal.

But we were not over the hump just yet!

On September 8, Virginia was hit with a significant rainfall event. The heavy rains that were sustained for the majority of the day resulted in overflowing streams and creeks. By late afternoon these waterways quickly overran their banks and Alexandria, along with the rest of the Washington Metropolitan area was faced with a major flooding event.

Near the City line, Alexandria units responded into Fairfax County where a motorist was stranded inside his vehicle as water quickly rose around it. The crew from Truck 208 deployed their 100 foot ladder out to the vehicle where firefighters climbed on top of the car and were able to extract the driver and get him safely to dry land. As the last firefighter was climbing up onto the

ladder from the car, the water's current swept the car away, sending it downstream several hundred feet. On the West end of the City in the 600 block of Pickett Street, Fire and EMS personnel faced another flooding situation that trapped building occupants in their businesses. Crews worked for



Fire, Police and Sheriff units stage on Eisenhower Avenue as they address the Citywide flood emergency on September 8.

a prolonged period of time removing people trapped in buildings and getting them safely to higher ground.

On the East end of the City near Eisenhower Avenue and Telegraph Road, Cameron Run overran its



A wall of debris next to Interstate 95 is all that remains a day after the September 8 flood.

Source: Alexandria Facebook Page

banks and began trapping motorists in vehicles and workers in their offices. Many in buildings occupants climbed up to the second floor as the first floor was flooded with water. Flood waters and debris covered Interstate 95 at Telegraph Road which resulted in the closure of the highway. Firefighters and **SEE FIRE, PAGE 11, COL. 1**

## EMS News

## 50th Anniversary of the Alexandria Plan

On June 24, members of the Alexandria Fire Department joined with INOVA Alexandria Health Professionals to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Alexandria Plan.

In 1961, Alexandria Hospital became the first facility in the nation to staff an emergency department around the clock with dedicated emergency room physicians. This set the course of emergency medicine throughout the country which became nationally known as the "Alexandria Plan".

Dr. James J. Mills, Jr. was charged with solving the problem of an overwhelmed and understaffed emergency room at Alexandria Hospital. Through the vision of Dr. Mills and three other

ued at the emergency department is a Congratulutions Martie on your retirement! testimonial to the vision Dr. Mills had ment! 50 years ago.



EMS Supervisor Martha Tuthill

On June 30 the Department bid farewell to EMS Supervisor Martha "Martie" Tuthill who retired after 30 years of service with the Alexandria Fire Department. Martie was in the first group of "civilian" paramedics that were hired by the Department back in the 1970s. Prior to that time, firefighters staffed the City ambulances and provided basic life support to residents. The paramedic program of the 1970s was innovative for the Washington D.C. region and the model of hiring employees solely dedicated to providing emergency medical care continues to be one of the unique EMS delivery systems in the metropolitan area.



Dr. Brian Zink, Dept. of Emergency Medicine at Brown University presents the history of the Alexandria Plan.

physicians, these doctors gave up their private practices to become full time emergency physicians.

Over the next two decades, the Alexandria Plan became the standard of care used by hospitals across the country as they managed increasing numbers of emergency room patients.

During the 1970s as Alexandria's emergency department continued to grow, the need for more advanced medical services in the field gave rise to the creation of the advanced life support program that INOVA Alexandria Hospital and the Alexandria Fire Department manage today.

The high standard of care provided by on scene paramedics and contin-



Retired Assistant Fire Chief Vince Whitmore (center) spends time with AFD members at the 50th Anniversary of the Alexandria Plan. Pictured l to r: EMS Supv. Jeff Woolsey, EMS Ops Mgr. Brian Hrick, EMS Supv. John Rule, EMS Supv. Lisa Jones, Fire Chief Adam Thiel, Assistant Fire Chief Andrew Sneed and Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Lindsey.

## EMS Promotion



Mike Gerber was promoted to EMS Supervisor on September 17. Mike has been assigned as EMS 231 in the East Battalion. Congratulations Mike.

## EMS Sim Lab Provides Realistic Training.



An adult mannequin, Lifepak, and various computer simulation equipment are located in one section of the EMS Sim Lab.

Station 202 now has an EMS Simulator lab. The lab provides training opportunities for Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support providers. A vast array of EMS equipment provides students with opportunities to treat a variety of medical and trauma emergencies. Several state of the art patient mannequins in adult and pediatric sizes allow students to deal with situations unique to each type of patient. The Department will be utilizing the EMS Sim lab as part of the EMT refresher curriculum. AFD staff will now go to Station 202 several times a

**SEE EMS, PAGE 9, COL. 3**



By Firefighter Glenn Ross

Dictionary.com defines the word complacency as: a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while **unaware of some potential danger**, defect, or the like; self-satisfaction or smug satisfaction with an existing situation, condition, etc.

The evening of July 14, 2011 at Fire Station 206(B) was typical; the Engine, Medic, and Battalion Chief were cleaning dinner dishes, mopping the kitchen floor, and wondering how many times we would be getting up that night. In a matter of minutes we went from a routine evening at the firehouse, to a working house fire. Up to this point, you may be thinking "so what". Well my brothers and sisters, I believe that it would be an injustice if I did not pass on this information. From the newest member, to the most seasoned veteran, there is a wealth of lessons to be learned and reinforced from my personal experience at this particular incident.

This article is written in the most basic form, with a lot of little details added. This has been done for our newer members who may not have had the chance to experience a working fire event yet in their career.

Emergency call volume for this day had been slow for us, with one call in the morning that we were returned prior to arrival. Fire Communications had just recently alerted Engine and Truck 208 for an elevator incident. At 8:56 pm the station alert tones sounded for the Engine and Battalion Chief. "Signal 3, Box 5871, for a report of smoke in the house, 4427 Venable Avenue" reported the dispatcher over the station speakers. First alarm units consisted of Engines 207,107,206,203, Tower 203, Truck 410, Rescue Squad 426, Medic 208, Battalions 212, 211, Aide 215, and Safety 201. As we responded down North Jordan Street, my complacent thoughts were "Oh this is probably an overheated air condition-

ing motor, burnt food on the stove, or maybe a melted dish in the dishwasher....no big deal, nothing to it."

As we crossed over Duke Street, I noticed several Alexandria Police Department (APD) cruisers responding emergency to the same location, and they were driving with a great sense of urgency. As we turned left onto Venable Ave, I heard our Driver Operator, Firefighter Dave Lukes, ask for a final confirmation from Captain Santano on the hydrant location and the exact address. Captain Santano stated "the hydrant is right there, and the house is the one down there with the smoke showing!" In a matter of seconds everything changed. We did not have a burned air conditioning motor, no burnt food on the stove, nor was it a melted dish in the dishwasher. We had a working house fire!

Firefighter Lukes stopped the engine at the hydrant, dropped off his layout section, and drove towards the house. As we approached, the smoke became thicker. Once Firefighter Lukes positioned the engine past the house and stopped, I exited and walked around to quickly estimate the hose stretch. I went and grabbed the crosslay and proceeded up to the front door. I dropped the shoulder load, located the 50' couplings, and stretched the line out getting it ready. Captain Santano told me he was going to do a complete walk around the house to size up the situation. As he performed this, I knelt down, put on my face piece, and did a quick bleed down of the attack line, ensured the nozzle was set to straight stream, and looked back for any kinks in the hose line. The visibility was absolutely zero. The scene I was witnessing could have been a photo right out of Fire Engineering Magazine; heavy black-brown smoke, pushing under a great deal of pressure from the front door, window cracks, and roof eaves. No visible flames. I was thinking this is probably a basement fire.

My thoughts were confirmed when Captain Santano came back around from his size-up and told me we did have a basement fire. I asked him if there was an exterior entrance to the basement and he told me he did not see one, but he wanted to go check again. Visibility was zero and getting worse. He came back around and told me he didn't see any basement entrance and we proceeded to make entry through the front door. As I crawled in, I was unaware that the "front door" I was entering was really the front porch entrance. I knew this fire had been burning awhile, and my thoughts were either the floor was going to collapse or once we made it to the basement, the floor will collapse on top of us.

I had thoughts of a fully involved basement fire I was on in the mid 1990's, at 109 South Gordon Street. At that fire we all narrowly averted danger as the floor directly inside the front door had weakened to the point of deformity. I also recalled a mutual box I was on a few years ago in the North Springfield section of Fairfax County. Crews again, narrowly averted danger as the first floor collapsed completely due to heavy fire conditions on the floor below. I knew that this particular neighborhood on Venable Avenue has older style construction; therefore we had some additional time on our side, unlike newer construction which tends to burn and fail faster than older structures. I began sounding the floor as we entered, and it felt solid like concrete...that should have been a clue for me I wasn't on the main living room floor yet. As we got closer in, I continued sounding the floor. The sound went from solid concrete to a wood sound. Attack line advancement was difficult due to low visibility and lots of storage items in the residence. We stopped, and Captain Santano utilized his thermal imager to get our bearings and, find the location of the basement steps. Disorientation factor was a 10 on a scale of 1to10. I maintained my  
**SEE COMPLACENCY, PAGE 8, COL. 2**

## Supporting the Alexandria Fire Department

There are many Alexandria Fire Departments. There is one in Minnesota, another in Kentucky. There's one in Louisiana, Indiana, and one in Tennessee, just to name a few. Each one is different. Some protect small, rural areas of the country while others, like our own in Virginia protect densely populated areas with large populations. The equipment of each Alexandria Fire Department differs greatly. Some have many engine and ladder truck companies supplemented by a variety of specialty units while others have the basic complement of equipment to get the job done. Response times differ from our own on scene goal of 5.5 minutes to rural companies where 10-minute response is viewed as the best response time. The variety of departments is broad based, as is their mission.

However, there is one Alexandria Fire Department that has only slightly over 100 members, no engines or ladder trucks. It protects a small city not measured in miles but in feet. And its response to on scene time is measured in seconds and not minutes. This is the Alexandria Fire Department of the Los Angeles class attack submarine USS Alexandria.

We think of submarines in terms of the many movies we watch at the movie theater or on DVD. They are stealthy machines that ride beneath the waves, armed with torpedoes and missiles to carry out the mission of our Nation's defense. We never know where they are or what they are doing, but that is because they are designed that way. They are the Silent Service.

The Silent Service is a proud profession in the United States Navy and when they extend a hand in friendship to the local fire department of Alexandria, we gladly accept that hand and offer our support. That occurred in May of this year when Commander Todd Weeks, Captain of the USS Alex-

andria extended an invitation to Fire Chief Adam Thiel and Chief Fire Marshal Bob Rodriguez to visit the crew of the Alexandria and tour the boat while they were docked in Groton, Connecticut. Chief Thiel and Chief Rodriguez traveled to Connecticut where they were met by Lieutenant Commander Billy Callahan, the Executive Officer and Machinist Mate Senior Chief (Submarine Service) (MMCS(SS)) James Mersereau, the Chief of the Boat (COB). The Alexandria Chiefs were driven to the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Connecticut. The Navy first acquired land for what is now the submarine base back in 1868. In 1872 the first structures were constructed on the site. On October 13,

1915 the monitor Ozark, a submarine tender, and four submarines arrived in Groton. Additional submarines and support craft arrived the following year and thus began the U.S. Submarine base at Groton, Connecticut. The Groton base has a proud history, including the launching of the first nuclear power submarine in 1954, the USS Nautilus. Today the base is home to twelve Los Angeles class Fast Attack submarines, including the USS Alexandria, and five new Virginia class Fast Attack submarines. A major submarine construction yard is just down river, General Dynamics' Electric Boat Division. The base also serves as the training ground for new submariners and for pre-commissioning crew for a new submarine. The base conducts the Basic Enlisted Sub School, which is an 8-week program that teaches the submariner the rigors of life underwater. Advanced schools in sonar, navigation, fire control, communications and Torpedo's Mates are provided at

the base as well. The first stop on the tour was at the fire-training simulator. The building contains a mockup of a typical submarine engine room. The room is filled with electrical equipment, piping, deck plating, watertight hatches and other equipment typically found in such a location. The training staff there displayed the firefighting gear and suppression equipment carried on board submarines. The staff conducted several fire evolutions, which included a hydraulic line leak and fire, an electrical panel fire and a fire involving the interior insulation of the submarine. In each scenario, time was the critical factor. Fire crews had to be on the scene within 40 seconds or less to initiate fire suppression activities.



Submarine Firefighting Simulator.

Source: Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division

The next stop was over to the Escape Trunk Trainer where Submariners are trained to wear special equipment in order to escape a submarine on the bottom of the ocean and make it safely to the surface to be rescued. The

**SEE SUPPORT, PAGE 10, COL. 1**



## Community Engagement

During the summer, the Alexandria Fire Department was busy out in the community. During the months of June through August the Department distributed 10 year Lithium battery smoke alarms to senior citizens as part of the "Get Alarmed Virginia" grant. Firefighters installed alarms free of charge and conducted in home fire safety inspections. They also provided each senior citizen with a packet of fire prevention literature that discussed such topics as cooking safety, home fire escape planning, candle safety and fall prevention.

The Department received 400 alarms from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Health. The majority of these alarms were installed during the summer months.



City residents get a tour of Medic 207 at National Night Out activities on Quaker Hill Court.

On August 2, the Department joined forces with the Alexandria Police Department and the Alexandria Sheriff's Office to participate in National Night Out. Fire and EMS companies visited many communities during the annual evening event. Communities were treated to tours of the fire and EMS



Moody Court residents tour Engine 206 as National Night Out celebrations wind down.

equipment as well as receiving fire prevention literature and goodies. In some cases the demand for visits by fire companies exceeded the availability of units. However, each company put their best efforts forward to get to as many sites as possible during the evening.

August 6 brought about the annual Friendship Firehouse Festival celebrated at the Friendship Fire House in the unit block of South Alfred Street in Old



Friendship Firehouse Festival

Source: alexandriava.gov

Town. The annual event again drew large crowds which included many families. The Department participated by providing equipment during the event and staffing a public outreach table. Nice weather made for a



AFD members and Firehouse Sub representatives gather at the Kingstown store. AFD received an \$8000 grant for the EMS Bike Medic Program from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation.

Source: Firehouse Subs

great day partaking in vintage and modern fire equipment in front of one of Alexandria's oldest fire stations.

On August 15, EMS providers gathered with representatives from

Fire House Subs in Kingstown to announce the award of an \$8,000 grant which was used to purchase two mountain bikes equipped with emergency kits which will be used to provide medical services at many of the City's outdoor special events.

In April 2011, a victim suffering from a cardiac emergency was recently saved by the Alexandria Bike Medic Team when they reached the scene before an ambulance arrived. The Department continues to prepare for increased service demands where they will continue to address similar critical circumstances with this donation, as events where bike teams are present are becoming more prevalent and popular.

The donation was made possible through the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation which, since 2005, has donated \$64,100 to public safety entities in Virginia.

On August 18, members of the Department partnered with radio station WKYS 93.9 FM to collect back to school supplies for Alexandria's underprivileged youth. Firefighters and Paramedics collected backpacks, pencils, pens and other supplies in front of Fire Station 209 during the morning event. WKYS broadcasted the event on their radio station and assisted in collecting these badly needed supplies.

On August 29, Firefighters from Alexandria and Fairfax County provided free haircuts to a number of underprivileged children. The children were met at Charles Houston Recreation Center and then transported to a local barber shop nearby where they received free haircuts. The firefighters helped with this event which aids needy children in getting ready for the upcoming school year.



School supply drive at Station 209.

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 13, COL. 3.

**Alive, From Page 2.****Visualization**

Mentally running through a task or operation in advance of actually performing that task can develop a level of comfort and calm when the time to perform the task arrives. If members focus on correct performance down to the smallest details (external focus) they not only are more likely to be comfortable and effective during task performance, but are also less likely to allow their thoughts to be overrun by fear and anxiety (internal focus.)

**Goal-Setting**

When the entirety of a dangerous or stress-

ful situation is considered, it is often easy to become overwhelmed and anxious. By breaking a big operation down into small pieces with easily attainable goals, the member's focus remains detail and operation-oriented (external focus) and the fundamental skills needed to stay safe are reinforced. A firefighter enroute to an apartment fire who feels anxiety setting in can concentrate first on pulling and stretching the proper attack line to the front of the building as a way to focus his or her thoughts. Once the line is stretched and positioned, focus can shift to correctly donning the SCBA and PPE components, and then to advancing the line up to the fire floor, and so on...

**Self-Talk**

Average human beings speak 300-1000 words to themselves per minute. When involved in a dangerous or stressful situation, the tendency to fill this internal "self-talk" with racing, negative thoughts can be overwhelming to a member who is trying to stay calm. By maintaining positive, constructive inner dialogue, the member can build the sense of calm and external focus  
**SEE ALIVE, PAGE 9, COL. 2.**

**Complacency, From Page 5.**

situational awareness as best as I could by knowing my hose line was my lifeline if needed. The thermal imager was invaluable and we found the "basement steps". To our surprise this was a split level home! More disorientation occurred mentally because advancing in, I thought this was a typical older home with the basement steps in the kitchen, with probably 12 or so steps going down. No it was more like 3 down. As I worked my way quickly down the steps I could feel the heat. It was hotter to my left so I found the left wall that followed to a doorway. I slowly pushed the door open. I could not see any flames. Just puffs of orange every now and then above me, and thick black rolling smoke. A danger sign that flashover is imminent. I quickly opened the nozzle and listened. All of my senses were utilized, hearing the fire burn, feeling the heat, listening as water turned to steam, feeling hot water burning my knees. I applied the stream in a T and Z pattern, cooling the upper atmosphere, while simultaneously cooling the fuel. I hoped I was hitting the seat of the fire, but I had no real idea due to visibility. I trusted my senses and experience. Someone made a radio transmission that we had heavy smoke and fire from the basement windows and it looks as if we were getting a good bit of water on the fire. Bingo! We were hitting it! The room cooled and additional windows were vented. Spot fires were hit with water and the fire was finally extinguished. Overhaul was started. As we sifted through the ashes and performed our secondary search, we were amazed that the back of the house had been modified and extended to create a church! Complete with pews, an offering plate, and a pulpit!! Outside there were more surprises. That's when I discovered that the front door was actually the entrance to the front porch, windows had been covered in plastic sheeting, and vinyl/aluminum siding had actually been

installed over some of the windows around the perimeter of the house.

Back inside, inspection of the floor joists in the room where the fire had originated revealed the fire had burned its way through most of the joists. These joists, as suspected were 2 inch x10 inch sawn lumber.

If this had been the gusset style or particle wood constructed truss as we find commonly in new construction, I have no doubt that this floor would have failed earlier, possibly before arrival of firefighters.

**Lessons Learned:**

- 1) **Complacency** is a known enemy of firefighters. Know your enemy and recognize its presence. It will, and has injured or killed firefighters across the nation. An example of my complacency towards this incident was the fact I was thinking that this was just another "routine" smoke odor event. Never, ever, be complacent about any calls! You need to leave complacency at that doorway threshold in the morning when you step inside the firehouse and report for duty.
- 2) **Situational Awareness** is paramount, and needs to be in place before you are even dispatched to an event. Listen to the radio even when you are not assigned to an incident. Knowing that Engine and Truck 208 were operating on another call was invaluable knowledge. Noticing that police cruisers were responding emergency towards our same area was a "clue" that *"Hey, something is going on here maybe more than we know."* Knowing the neighborhood was older style construction and that we had some additional time for structural members to be exposed to fire conditions gave me the confidence to enter the structure to do our job. Learn your neighborhoods and building construction. As far as operating on



an interior attack crew, always know two ways out! We preach this to school children all year, but sometimes forget to practice it ourselves as we are inside performing. It could save your life one day.

- 3) **Thermal Imager** use was invaluable at this incident.
- 4) **Sometimes you will not be able to recognize certain elements of danger** i.e. siding over windows, house style/type due to zero visibility, interior storage, hoarding etc. Remember this is an inherently dangerous job, and we can only do our best with training and what is presented to us at the time of the emergency. The fire ground is a dangerous, dynamic environment. Always be aware and remain aware! Be prepared for the unexpected!!!
- 5) **Remember and train** on the basics: fire behavior, hoses, ladders, etc.
- 6) **Always utilize all of your senses** of sight, sound, hearing, and feel. Educate and train your personal *firefighter intuition*, and learn to trust it....it will rarely not point you towards the right direction.
- 7) **Just because the fire is out, certain dangers still exist** to a high degree. For example, at this fire, floor collapse could have still occurred. Be careful of spongy floor conditions when operating above the fire. Be careful what you pull on with that pike pole, or direct that water stream at when overhauling- it may be the catalyst for collapse. Continue wearing your SCBA as carbon monoxide and other dangerous gases still exist for a time after extinguishment.

## Conclusion

Right: EMS Supervisor Bryan Meckes speaks before an audience of the National Independent Flag Dealers Association about his experiences during 9-11 at the Pentagon.

The house fire on Venable Avenue offered valuable lessons to be reviewed and studied. As a new firefighter back in the early 1990's, I had the fortunate opportunity to learn lessons from senior firefighters and Captains who fought these type of fires on a daily basis back in the 1960's and 1970's. Today, a lot of our experience has retired, but hopefully we can share and pass on information to each other so we can go home to our loved ones after the shift ends. Be safe, and never stop learning! 🚒

## Alive, From Page 8.

needed to avoid panic. In situations where panic is increasingly likely, a single word or mantra can be repeated over and over again, rather than constructing full sentences or phrases. Words like "breathe" "smooth" or "easy" combined with long, deep breaths can instill a sense of calm and help to suppress destructive anxiety.

The fire and rescue service requires its members to operate in many stressful and potentially dangerous environments as a matter of routine. The natural, physiological responses of the body to these environments can leave members severely limited in their ability to select and execute the safe and effective tactics required for survival. Only through proper pre-programming, exposure, and training can proper instincts and muscle memory be developed. Members who are prepared to recognize the onset of anxiety and panic, and to fight it off with the correct techniques, are much more likely to respond correctly when their lives are in danger. 🚒



## EMS, From Page 4.

year to conduct practical scenarios and take exams.

The EMS Sim Lab is an excellent addition to the Department's continuing education resources.

## Remembering 9-11

EMS staff were involved in several public events commemorating the 10th Anniversary of 9-11.

On July 12, Paramedics Johnny McCarther and Jason Schmauder taped interviews with Country Music Television (CMT) for their new series "Angels Among Us". Johnny and Jason recounted their response to the Pentagon on 9-11 and their treatment of a severely injured patient inside the pentagon after the crash of American Airlines Flight 77. The patient was able to make a full recovery from his injuries and was also interviewed as part of the TV series. Angels Among Us debuted on September 11 on CMT-TV.



Paramedic Johnny McCarther prepares to be interviewed by CMT-TV for the Angels Among Us TV series.

On August 4, EMS Supervisor Bryan Meckes spoke before the National Independent Flag Dealers Association (NIFDA) at the Embassy Suites Hotel. Bryan spoke of his experience at the Pentagon on 9-11 and the importance that the American Flag played in motivating personnel to work harder at the disaster scene.

Representatives of NIFDA presented the department with a U.S. Flag and two commemorative September 11 flags in appreciation for the Department's continuing service to the community. 🇺🇸

## Support, From Page 6.

trainer, which is a large cylindrical tank with a depth of over 50 feet, is outfitted with a series of escape trunks at various levels. Submariners train gradually at deeper depths exiting and making their way to the surface. The facility also houses one of a limited number of hyperbaric chambers that is large enough for a patient and medical team. While the chamber is used in the event of an accident at the trainer, it is designated as an emergency hyperbaric chamber for diving accidents along the upper East Coast. A diver can be transported to the chamber and medical staff will be waiting to treat him upon his arrival.

Several other training buildings and simulators are located on the base to instruct crews in all aspects of a submarine from the damage control wet trainer; Ship Control - i.e. "Dive and Drive."; to a nuclear reactor simulator for dealing with engine room radioactive emergencies.

The final stop was down river to the General Dynamics' Electric Boat Division. There the USS Alexandria was waiting in dry dock. At 362 feet in length, weighing 6,000 tons, this machine was massive when out of the water. The Alexandria was in dry dock for maintenance and upgrades to her systems. It turned out to be the most opportune time to tour a nuclear submarine literally from top to bottom. Commander Weeks introduced the

chiefs to the crew that morning. Afterward they toured the boat topside, then inside through all the decks and finally below the keel of the submarine. There was no doubt that these men were extremely proud of the boat they served on.



Topside at the missile silos, LCDR Billy Callahan discusses the missile packages used on board the USS Alexandria. Source: US Navy

Each submarine is basically a small city encased in steel which operates in the deep layers of the ocean. Submarines produce oxygen and fresh water. They provide a suitable climate for their inhabitants to live in. Power is generated

to provide light, circulate air and operate critical systems inside. Food is stored and prepared and disposed of on board. Trash and waste are carefully prepared for disposal. On board the crew lives, work and sleep in very tight quarters for months at a time. There are laundry facilities, locker facilities and sleeping quarters.

There are work areas where crews perform

various tasks during their duty shift and areas where they can spend their limited downtime playing board games, video games or reading when not sleeping, drilling or performing other critical tasks. It is also an environment filled with hazards which include hundreds of gallons of hydraulic fluid flowing throughout the boat, explosives and nuclear materials. The utmost

care by all aboard is necessary to ensure that the world of a submarine is as safe as possible. That basically means that safety is everyone's concern. "Fire is our worst enemy" Commander Weeks said. "It can strike at anytime and inflict significant damage to a submarine. We drill and practice continuously to avoid such an event."

On a submarine, the Executive Officer (XO) is the incident commander for any fire on board. "My role is to respond to the scene of any fire on board; direct the crew in their suppression activities; and keep the control room advised of our status" said LCDR Billy Callahan.

The Captain, who is in the Control Room will evaluate the situation and make decisions based on the circumstances at the time. "Putting the fire out quickly to minimize the heat and smoke output is critical," said Callahan. "Unlike surface ships, we can't



Down Under. CMDR Weeks gives a tour underneath the keel of the USS Alexandria while in dry dock. Source: US Navy.

simply open a window and vent smoke to the outside air."

So what happens if a fire occurs on board? In general, sections of the boat are isolated from each other either by closing hatches or dropping smoke curtains. The crew still needs

**SEE SUPPORT, PAGE 12, COL. 1**



Addressing the Crew of the USS Alexandria, (l to r): MMCS(SS) James Mersereau, CMDR Todd Weeks (Captain), CFM Bob Rodriguez, FC Adam Thiel, LCDR Billy Callahan. The command staff are wearing Fireboat 201 hats. Source: US Navy



### Fire, From Page 3

EMS providers began rescuing many trapped motorists and building occupants. However, firefighters quickly found themselves in need of rescue when a wall of water headed towards the crew of Engine 207. The crew scrambled onto their fire engine and sought shelter on the cab roof as the vehicle became surrounded by water. The crew of Engine 207 rode the event out on the cab roof until assistance arrived.

Prince Georges County, Maryland provided a fire department swift water team to assist Alexandria during the flood incident. The Loudoun County team that assisted during Hurricane Irene was also in the area assisting as well. By the end of the event, at least 30 people were rescued from the flood. Engine 207 sustained a serious amount of damage from the flood and remains off line as a front line piece at this time.

Many of the on duty staff were completely drenched from rain and flood waters. A command post and rehab area was established at the Courtyard of Alexandria hotel. Department personnel were able to get dry clothing and food while they prepared to deal with additional anticipated flooding later that evening.

While it wasn't the end of the world, the number of significant events continually tasked the Department's limited resources. Despite this, AFD personnel answered each call and continued to do whatever was necessary to resolve each situation professionally and responsibly. As we enter Fall, we can only hope for a mild Winter season. 🚒

### Playing With Trains

Alexandria and Arlington firefighters had a unique training opportunity on September 19, 20 and 21. Norfolk Southern Railroad brought in their Trans Care Car and provided on site training to first responders each day on railroad emergencies. Information provided included locomotive and rolling stock emergencies.

The Trans Care Car is operates in partnership with DuPont and features a



The Norfolk Southern Trans Care Car provided invaluable training to Alexandria and Arlington Fire Departments over a three day period in September.

classroom and lab where students are instructed on rail emergencies and get to look at various rail car components up close in the lab. The train also includes a tank car used for training first responders in rail emergencies. The car is designed to simulate various types of tank



Inside the Trans Care Car is a full classroom where firefighters can learn about various rail hazards.



The lab inside the Trans Car Car allows firefighters to get an up close view of various safety components equipped on rail cars.

car issues in a safe environment and provides first responders with hands on learning experience.

The training was provided free of charge and offered Alexandria and Arlington Fire Departments on going essential training in rail emergencies that neither department has available to them on a regular bases.

### AFD Fire Boat Has a Full Weekend

During the weekend of September 11, Alexandria's Fire boat responded to several calls on the Potomac River. On September 10 at 5:47pm, Fireboat 201, the Vigilant, responded to a vessel reporting a fire onboard in the area of Buoy #84 on the Potomac River. Boat 201 contacted the U.S. Coast Guard and Prince George County Fire Department and requested their assistance.

The Vigilant arrived on the scene of the distressed vessel, a 45 foot cabin cruiser with eight persons on board. A D.C. Harbor Patrol vessel had arrived on scene about two minutes ahead of the fireboat and removed seven adults and one infant from the vessel.

Firefighters found the remains of a starboard engine turbo fire which burned the cabin floor and surrounding area. The crew conducted salvage and overhaul operations onboard the vessel. Once completed, the vessel was turned over to the U.S. Coast Guard.

On September 11 at 11:50am, the Vigilant was dispatched for a Recreational Vehicle (RV) fire with propane tank involved on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. While fire equipment responded on the bridge to extinguish the RV fire, the crew of the fireboat responded to supply the bridge's fire protection system using water drafted from the Potomac River.

The crew of the Vigilant coordinated with firefighters on the roadway who used the water supplied by the fireboat to extinguish the RV fire. Fire Department units remained on the scene for approximately 2 hours. The incident resulted in major delays on Interstate 95. 🚒

**Support, From Page 11.**

an air supply since smoke generated by a fire contains many toxic materials. In order to maintain a good air supply, the crew dons face pieces similar to those used in firefighter's breathing



In the torpedo room. LCDR Billy Callahan explains how torpedoes are loaded onto the submarine through the forward torpedo hatch.

Source: US Navy

apparatus. But these face pieces have a quick connect hose that attaches to an in-line air system known as an Emergency Air Breathing system or EAB. EABs are distributed throughout the submarine in critical locations that allow the crew to connect in and man critical systems as well as conduct firefighting activities. Each EAB station contains four quick connect outlets. The EAB locations are marked by special markings on the deck plate. Crewmembers looking for an EAB station can either see it or feel it while walking the deck. Each crewmember carries their face piece in a damage control bag. In addition to the face piece, the bag contains fire retardant gloves and a fire retardant hood. The gloves are 100% cotton, treated with a flame retardant chemical. The hood is a flame resistant 80% PFR Rayon / 20% Kevlar blend.

When underway, the crew wears blue coveralls. The coveralls are pretreated with fire retardant chemicals. In a fire condition, the first arriving crew wears

the standard coveralls. They put on their protective hood and face piece as well as their gloves and begin fire suppression activities. First arriving crews have 15 seconds to apply extinguishing agent on the fire with portable extin-

guishers. The boat has a number of CO<sub>2</sub> and AFFF portable extinguishers evenly distributed throughout. Within 2 minutes, fire crews must have a pressurized hose line in service. On the Alexandria, there are hose stations with 1-½ hose lines in each compartment of the boat. There are suffi-

cient lengths of hose at each location to reach all areas of the protected area. Hose lines operate at 70 psi and draw on 40,000 pounds of seawater in ready supply tank. The crew can draw in seawater from outside the sub if they deplete the supply tank. Finally, if the situation is severe enough, a three man hose team in full 30 minute Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), full firefighting turnout gear (FFE) and a Thermal Imager (Naval Firefighters Thermal Imager or NFTI, pronounced nifty) must be in place within 6 minutes. The XO, with SCBA arrives on the scene and takes command of the situation. XO's are issued red shirts, which they pull over their equipment and readily identify them as the Incident Commander. The XO's job, in addition to directing firefighting activities, includes keeping in constant contact with the Control Room and apprising the Captain of the progress of the firefighting operations as well as a situational assessment of the

overall severity of the incident as it relates to the boat's condition.

While fire suppression operations are on going, the rest of the crew is securing the boat to prevent the spread of fire and smoke into other compartments. This involves the closing and securing of interior hatches and the lowering of smoke curtains in the passageways and entry areas. The remaining crewmembers don their face pieces and connect to the EAB system. They continue their duties while the Captain assesses the incoming reports from the XO. Based on the mission situation at the time, the Captain will determine whether to surface the boat or remain submerged. If there is no outside threat to the boat, the Captain will surface the boat and open the exterior hatches to begin ventilation of the interior compartments. If there is another threat to the boat or the mission, the Captain may decide to remain submerged for a period of time until he determines surfacing is safe to do. While remaining submerged, the crew will continue to operate on the EAB system and carry out their mission without interruption. The exact amount of time the boat can remain underwater during a fire condition is classified but LCDR Callahan assures that "We should always be able to surface and ventilate long before we run out of breathing air."

While the crew is prepared to handle a fire, fire prevention takes a higher priority. The prevention of a fire is critical to the safety of the crew and the success of the mission. Senior Chief Mersereau says the crew is always performing maintenance and prevention inspections when not at their duty posts. "We are always mindful of fire prevention and our folks are dutifully inspecting, checking and maintaining the boat to ensure that everything continues to run properly and we don't get into a fire scenario". LCDR Callahan added "We do have



high standards and a culture of cleanliness with respect to fire prevention, especially when it comes to flammable material stowage, standing oil, and oily rags. We do preventative maintenance on our damage control equipment - some after use and some daily, monthly, semi-annually, and annually."

Fire Drills are another regular part of the life aboard a submarine. The crew constantly drills on a variety of scenarios in order to be properly prepared. "Normally (we drill) about twice a week," said Callahan. Drills while underway involve some creative ways to

While protecting our country is the primary mission of the crew of the Alexandria, prevention fires and being prepared to fight them when they occur are also high priorities as well. "We did have one fire on another submarine I was assigned to" recalled Senior Chief Mersereau. In that instance the fire was confined to the clothes dryer. "Someone forgot to clean out the lint trap before they put their clothes in to dry." With only one dryer on board the submarine, and the submarine many days out from reporting back to base, the loss of the dryer made for some discomfort for the remainder of the mission. "We had a lot of damp clothes

hanging around the sub and a lot of people in damp clothes for the rest of the mission" Mersereau said. Fortunately, it was only damp clothes that inconvenienced the crew after that fire and not something more serious.

The visit to the Alexandria reaffirmed that fire prevention and firefighter preparedness are key to continuity of operations, whether it is on board a fast attack submarine or in



The Captain, Commander Todd S. Weeks and Crew of the USS Alexandria (SSN 757) "Twice As Strong" pose in front of their boat in Groton, Connecticut prior to their next mission.

Photo Courtesy of the U. S. Navy.

simulate fire conditions. Because the boat is underway, the crew cannot use smoke or fog generators or set fires like regular fire departments do at their burn buildings. Instead, the crew relies on issuing covered face pieces to simulate smoke conditions. They even use red rope lighting to simulate the location of a fire on board. Through continuous practice the crew maintains a standard of top performance when responding to a fire emergency.

downtown Historic Alexandria. Whether you are on board the USS Alexandria or on board an engine company or truck company in the Alexandria Fire Department, fire prevention and firefighting readiness are no less important. Those two things both Alexandria Fire Departments can say they have in common. The Alexandria, Virginia Fire Department wishes the crew of the USS Alexandria a safe journey and safe return as they head off on their next mission. We support all that you do for our Nation. 🚒

## Community, From Page 7.

On September 19 Fire Chief Adam Thiel and Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator Ashley Ehrhart were interviewed by Mayor William Euille on *Mayor Euille Today*. Chief Thiel and Ms. Ehrhart spoke about emergency preparedness and Fire Department resources as part of segment on the City's response to the recent earthquake, hurricane and flash flood events.



Asst. Emer. Mgmt. Coord. Ashley Ehrhart and Fire Chief Adam Thiel talk about emergency preparedness and the Department's response to a series of recent natural disasters with Mayor William Euille.

During the month of October, Fire Companies and Community Services staff ventured out to all City schools during Fire Prevention Month providing valuable fire safety information to 4th grade classes. Firefighters were well received by each school. Hundreds of students benefitted from the annual month long outreach event. Twenty two public and private schools were visited over the three week period.

During the month of October, the Department supported the Alexandria Breast



Captain Thurston McClain sits with several students who were provided free haircuts as part of a joint outreach effort with Fairfax County firefighters. Source: T. McClain.

SEE COMMUNITY, PAGE 15, COL.1.

## Fire Administration and Support Services

Over the past several months there have been a number of developments in Fire Administration and Support Services.

In Human Resources the Fire Lieutenant and Battalion Chief promotional processes are underway. Testing for both positions began in October. Anticipated wrap up and announcement of promotions is expected in mid December.

Medic recruitment is on going. Initial testing has been completed and candidates who have passed are moving forward in the process. The next Medic recruit class is scheduled to begin the second week of January.

The 39th Fire Recruit Class is continuing their training and plans are for them to graduate on December 8.

A number of employees have retired or left the Department for other employment.

In July Assistant Fire Chief Russell Middleton retired after 33 years of service with the Department. EMS Supervisor Martha Tuthill, Emergency Management Planner Charlie McRorie and Firefighter Brian Ford retired as well.



Assistant Fire Chief Russell Middleton

In August, Firefighter Doug Townshend retired.

In September Paramedic Steve Boyer, Captain Charles Davis and Firefighter Richard Pates retired.

NIMS Compliance Officer Don Barkledge took a position with a consulting firm and Programmer /Analyst Sirriat Kongree accepted a position with an IT firm closer to home.

### Fiscal Management

Apparatus bids closed on September 1, 2011 for fire engines and a ladder truck. The proposed vendor is Red Storm. Signoff should occur by mid-November.

Two leased engines and a leased ladder truck were obtained for the Professional Development Center to be used for the 39<sup>th</sup> Fire Recruit School.

The FY2013 budget process is moving forward. Staff will continue to collect data for the budget in the coming months and request everyone's support they prepare requested documents.

### Division Chief Lynch

Mr. Lynch's role in the Department is changing. He will now be reporting directly to the Fire Chief and E-Team and providing them more direct support.

### Fire Prevention and Life Safety

Fire Protection Retesting Inspectors now have Radio ID numbers and will use Channel 2A to call in and out alarm systems. The radio identifiers are as follows:

Maurice Jones, FPS Supervisor – Inspector 200

Margaret King, Inspector – Inspector 201

Mike Welch, Inspector – Inspector 202

Ray Overkott, Inspector – Inspector 203

Chris Doyle, Inspector – Inspector 204

Don Mackall, Inspector – Inspector 205

Willie Stein, Inspector – Inspector 206

On October 1, when Certificates of Occupancies are issued to allow buildings to be occupied, the Fire Department is a part of the process. Personnel will be conducting walkthroughs of buildings prior to occupancy focusing on building systems; alarm rooms; Knox Box locations; hydrants; FDC locations; etc.

### Special Operations

Station 210 - The company awarded the construction contract has met the City's price for the project. Station 210 is slated to go in service in August 2013.

Station 211 is still on track. Staff continues to work with the Developer. The site for Station 211 is at the intersection of Beauregard Street and Sanger Avenue. It will be a 4 bay station with drive through bays and will be fully staffed by AFD personnel.

Acting Lieutenants Wimer and Reyes were assigned to the BRAC 133 project for three months. They developed policies and procedures for dealing with BRAC-133. They also conducted training sessions with all field personnel on the features and challenges that are associated with this Federal facility. The Department will have full responsibility for all Hazmat, EOD, EMS, and Fire incidents at the facility.

The Department has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Department of Emergency Management to purchase needed equipment. The Department has also been awarded a \$750,000 Port Security Grant which will be applied towards training needs for the Marine Operations Team. The grant has a three year performance period and includes training funds as well as funding for two swift water rescue boats. The grant was awarded in late August.

**SEE ADMINISTRATION, PAGE 15, COL. 3**



**Community, From Page 13.**

Cancer Walk Fund by selling pink Breast Cancer Awareness t-shirt at Fire Station 201. All proceeds from the t-shirt sales were donated to the Fund, and Alexandria Fire Department employees wore the shirts as part of their uniform every day in October. Shirts sold for \$15 for short-sleeve



Firefighters Kim Bosser, Sokthear Van, Fred Ruff and Captain Phil Perry wear AFD pink t-shirts at a Breast Cancer Awareness event. Source: R. Masser

shirts and \$20 for long-sleeve. Hundreds of dollars were raised to support the Alexandria Breast Cancer Walk Fund, which has helped over 5,000 uninsured Alexandria women receive free mammograms and other diagnostic screenings since its inception in 1994.

On October 7, the Department once again gathered at Ivy Hill Cemetery to remember those who died in the line of duty and retirees who had passed away over the previous year. Former Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Director



Retired firefighter Phillip S. Harrington places a red rose in the trumpet during the Roll Call of the Fallen at the annual Fire Department Memorial Service.

Source: S. Saltgaver

Ken Melson gave the keynote speech. In addition to the sixteen previous line of duty deaths recognized annually, the Department recognized eight retirees who had passed away since the last memorial service in 2010.

On October 15, all Alexandria Fire Stations opened their doors to the public for the annual Open House event. Hundreds of residents and visitors took part in the Saturday event. Each station provided a variety of fire safety displays and activities which got out the message of fire safety to the community. In addition to the open houses, staff from the Fire Prevention and Life Safety Section set up a table at Market Square during the weekly Farmers Market where they provided fire and life safety information to visitors throughout the morning.



Residents gather at Station 204 during the Department's annual Fire Prevention Open House.

Finally there's a new program on TV. Fire Chief Adam Thiel is featured each month on a new program called the *Fire Chief's Corner*. The program will air Monday at 7pm; Thursday at 6pm; Saturday at 9:30pm. It will also air on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays at 2 and 4 am and on Tuesday, Thursdays and Saturdays at 1 and 3 am. The program airs on Comcast Channel 69 in Alexandria. 📺

**Administration, From Page 14**

Fireboat bid is still being worked on. There were some issues raised that have to be resolved before the proposal can go out for bid.

**Professional Development Center**

The Professional Development Roadmap is ready. An IB will be out soon with an implementation plan.

The Portable Incident Command Training Simulator (PICTS) Grant has provided most of the equipment to begin incident command training. The equipment and radios for the PICTS system will be used for PICTS training.

The Pump Operator class for Fire Emergency Services staff is continuing. Four engines developed problems during the testing and are undergoing repairs that address those issues.

EMT recertifications – all staff will begin using the EMT simulator lab at Station 202 to meet EMT CEUs for recertifications. Staff will be tested on each unit of instruction after completion of the training.

The PDC has awarded \$10,000 mini grant for training and education. Staff are now reviewing several proposals that will use these funds to benefit the Department.

High Voltage Training occurred on September 6 and 7. This was presented by Dominion Power and was part of the NOVA Training curriculum. The classes were held at Station 209. 🚒

## Awards and Recognition

### Department Employees Honored at Annual Awards Ceremony

On June 24, 2011, members of the Fire Department gathered at the Masonic Temple to celebrate the Department's Recognition, Retirement and Promotional Ceremony. Employees received awards, promotions or were recognized for their recent retirements by Fire Chief Adam Thiel and the Department's Executive Team.

Awards were presented to staff for the following accomplishments:

#### Retirees

Kip Anderson, Captain  
Pam Boggan, Customer Support Engineer III  
Felipe Guidotti, Code Enforcement Engineer  
Virginia Lester, Fiscal Officer  
Ed Turner, Inspector II

#### Promotional Recipients

##### Lieutenant to Fire Captain

Dan McMaster

#### Special Recognition Award Recipients

##### Medal of Valor, Lifesaving

Jason Cage, Paramedic  
Matthew Craig, Firefighter II  
Michael Faber, Firefighter II  
Elizabeth King, Paramedic  
Thurston McClain, Captain  
John Shaffer, Firefighter II  
James Taylor, Firefighter II  
Doug Townshend, Acting Lieutenant

##### Valor Awards

Brianne Barbour, Paramedic  
Charles Brown, II, Firefighter I  
Paul Kaulfers, Firefighter I  
Timothy Kunkle, Firefighter II

Joseph Barrett Payne, Firefighter I

Bethany Richards, Firefighter II

John Silverwood, Firefighter II

Matt Strauss, Paramedic

Khoa Tran, Paramedic

Tony Washington, Captain

Ray Whatley, EMS Supervisor

##### Officer(s) of the Year

John Morehead, Acting Battalion Chief

Jason Wehmeyer, Captain

##### Firefighter(s) of the Year

Greg Baylor, Firefighter II

Michael Dunn, Firefighter II

Jeffrey Harrison, Firefighter II

Greg Nichols, Firefighter II

Sam Reyes, Firefighter II

##### EMS Provider(s) of the Year

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

Lisa Jones, EMS Supervisor

Matt Strauss, Paramedic

Ray Whatley, EMS Supervisor

##### Outstanding Administrative Employees of the Year

Bobbie Davis-Soto, Human Resources Technician

Mark Hartmann, Network Engineer

Monique Jackson-Asante, Administrative Analyst

##### Outstanding Customer Service

Wendy Baden, Inspector II

Charles Cooper, Inspector I

Donna Dailey, Permit Center Technician

Maurice Jones, FPS Supervisor

##### Hazardous Materials Team Member(s) of the Year

Michael Dunn, Firefighter II

Sam Good, Captain

##### Technical Rescue Team Member(s) of the Year

David Lukes, Firefighter II

Richard Pates, Firefighter II

Michael Sharpe, Captain

##### Marine Operations Team Member of the Year

Rodney Masser, Captain

##### Volunteer of the Year

Cyndi Lake, AVFD Vice President

#### *Special Thanks to*

##### 2010 Fire Communications Staff

Sandra Benarick

Leddyanne Dell

Michael Dewalt

Nela Hanson

Michael Keske

Nicole Lauerman

Tikisha Monagan

Christine Ponce

Sally Price

Jeanne Rexroad

Mary Ursiti

##### Special Achievement Awards

Patsieann Misiti, Outreach Specialist  
*Recipient, Sons of the American Revolution Fire Safety Medal*

Matt Strauss, Paramedic  
*Recipient, Sons of the American Revolution, EMS Commendation Medal*

##### Recognition of Meritorious Service

##### Equipment Committee

David Dell, Supply Clerk

Jay Fair, Captain

Thomas Harrell, Battalion Chief



## Fall 2011 Run Statistics (July through September)

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	146	244	390	1059	1350
Station 202	M202	414	94	527	1274	2401
Station 203	E203	131	181	312	659	1278
	T203	25	254	279	588	1060
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>1247</b>	<b>2338</b>
Station 204	E204	192	227	419	1131	1434
	T204	46	369	415	1057	1270
<b>Total</b>		<b>238</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>1627</b>	<b>2704</b>
Station 205	E205	202	325	527	1279	2097
	M205	564	150	714	1635	3128
<b>Total</b>		<b>766</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1241</b>	<b>2914</b>	<b>5225</b>
Station 206	E206	236	294	530	1173	2025
	M206	538	172	710	1579	2852
	R206	66	84	150	292	483
<b>Total</b>		<b>840</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>1390</b>	<b>3044</b>	
Station 207	E207	267	292	559	1528	2184
	M207	511	110	621	1807	2453
<b>Total</b>		<b>778</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>1180</b>	<b>2567</b>	<b>4637</b>
Station 208	E208	311	384	695	2061	2987
	M208	511	176	687	2111	3029
	T208	73	370	443	1214	1552
<b>Total</b>		<b>895</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>1825</b>	<b>5386</b>	<b>7568</b>
Station 209	E209	143	190	333	1034	1507
	H209	1	16	17	47	54
	S209	4	142	146	377	513
<b>Total</b>		<b>148</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>1458</b>	<b>2074</b>
Peak Time Medics	M213	133	31	164	427	0
	M214	147	28	175	332	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>280</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>0</b>
Station totals		<b>4664</b>	<b>4149</b>	<b>8813</b>	<b>25,226</b>	<b>33,657</b>

Jeff Harrison, Firefighter II

Kristina Holt, Firefighter II

David Lukes, Firefighter II

Dan McMaster, Captain

Rick Muse, Firefighter II

Robert Robinson, Acting  
Battalion Chief

Jason Wehmeyer, Captain

[Valor Awards Committee](#)

Robert Rodriguez, Chief Fire Marshal

Andrew Snead, Assistant Fire Chief

[2010 Open House Planning  
Committee](#)

David Bogozzi, Lieutenant

Jay Fair, Captain

Chet Helms, Battalion Chief

Eric Kreisher, Captain

Rodney Masser, Captain

Thurston McClain, Captain

Patsieann Misiti, Outreach Specialist

Robert Robinson, Acting  
Battalion Chief

Robert Rodriguez, Chief Fire Marshal

Andrew Snead, Assistant Fire Chief

Jeffrey Vallimont, Captain

Jason Wehmeyer, Captain

[Document Control](#)

Brian Ford, Firefighter II

Manuel Herrera, HR Manager

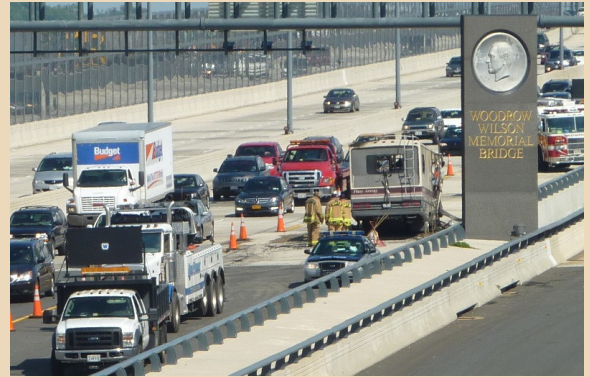
**SEE AWARDS, PAGE 20, COL. 1**

## HOT Shots



**Left:** Ms. Grainne Ostrowski 's daughter goes through some basic training as she prepares for a career with the Alexandria Fire Department. Photo courtesy of G. Ostrowski

**Right:** Units mop up after a RV Fire on the WW Bridge on September 11 that stopped traffic for over 2 hours. Photo by Jeanne Theismann, The Connection Newspapers



**Right (Above):** Fire units stand by after extinguishing a vehicle fire on I395 Southbound between King and Seminary in July.

**Right (Below):** Firefighters and Paramedics treat several victims of an automobile accident at Raleigh and Taney Avenues in September.



Fire crews extinguish a fire in an attic space in the 1100 block of Valley Drive on August 1.



Crews force entry to a garage in the rear of the 800 block of Duke Street where they found a vehicle on fire. The incident closed Duke Street for about an hour while fire crews overhauled the fire scene after the fire was extinguished on September 12.



Firefighters and Paramedics treat several victims of an automobile accident. A van drove through the front window of a restaurant in the 3200 block of Duke Street. Several persons were injured in the September incident.





**ALEXANDRIA  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE**

**Alexandria Chamber of Commerce  
Public Safety Valor Award 2011**

**NOMINATION FORM**

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First MI

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a narrative describing the circumstances surrounding the event for which you are making a nomination. **Do not** only attach an incident report. Be sure to detail the unique circumstances in which this individual performed his/her duty over and above the line of duty. Incident reports may be used to supplement the information you provide. Please submit a separate form for each person involved in an incident with multiple nominees. **Submit Nominations to Chief Rodriguez by January 15, 2011 via Community Services Unit, Alexandria Fire Department.**

*Attach additional sheets if necessary.*

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by Department Head: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Awards, From Page 17**

John Javelle, Fire Marshal  
 Lisa Jones, EMS Supervisor  
 Anthony Kelly, Firefighter II  
 John North, Battalion Chief  
 Duane Perry, Fire Marshal  
 Denise Pouget, Asst. Fire Chief  
 Sam Reyes, Firefighter II

**Communications Committee**

Sandy Benarick, Emergency Commu-  
 nications Technician

Leddyanne Dell, DEC Coordinator

Jay Fair, Captain

Joseph Hoffmaster, Battalion Chief

John Morehead, Captain

Sally Price, Emergency  
 Communications

Jason Schmauder, Paramedic

**EMS Training Committee**

Kelsea Bonkoski, EMS Supervisor

Allison Brown, Paramedic

Gary Eppich, Paramedic

Brett Fitzgerald, Paramedic

David Fox, Paramedic

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

Brian Hricik, EMS Operations Manager

William Jordan, Paramedic

Bryan Meckes, EMS Supervisor

Chip Myers, Paramedic

Matt Strauss, Paramedic

Joshua Weissman, Paramedic

Ray Whatley, EMS Supervisor

Jeff Woolsey, EMS Supervisor

**EMS Vehicle Committee**

Jason Cage, Paramedic

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

Mike Kohrt, Paramedic

Bryan Meckes, EMS Supervisor

Robert Robinson, Acting Battalion  
 Chief

Joseph Saputo, Maintenance  
 Supervisor

Matt Strauss, Paramedic

**EMS 1/5/10/20 Committee**

Byron Andrews, Captain

Kelsea Bonkoski, EMS Supervisor

Michael Chandler, Firefighter II

Dr. Thomas Clark

Pamela Copley

Diane Dickerson

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

Brian Hricik, EMS Operations Manager

Lisa Jones, EMS Supervisor

Cyndi Lake, Volunteer

Dr. Benjamin Marfori

Lonnie Phillips, EMS Supervisor

Donald Scott, Firefighter

Andrew Snead, Assistant Fire Chief

Adam K. Thiel, Fire Chief

Joshua Weissman, Paramedic

**Rehab Bus Committee**

Eric Kreisher, Captain

Mark Penn, Emergency Operations  
 Manager

Joseph Saputo, Maintenance  
 Supervisor

John Silverwood, Firefighter II

**Apparatus Committee**

Mike Ambrose, Firefighter II

Mike Christesen, Inspector II

Leddyanne Dell, EC Coordinator

Michael Dunn, Firefighter II

Eric Kreisher, Captain

David Lukes, Firefighter II

Pat Lyon, Firefighter II

Duane Perry, Fire Marshal

Robert Robinson, Acting Battalion  
 Chief

Joseph Saputo, Maintenance  
 Supervisor

Matt Strauss, Paramedic

**Uniform Committee**

Andrea Buchanan, Assistant Fire  
 Marshal

David Dell, Supply Clerk

Lisa Jones, EMS Supervisor

Michael Kohrt, Paramedic

Thurston McClain, Captain

Greg Nichols, Firefighter II

Thomas Rose, Fire Marshal

Darryl Stanton, Fire Marshal

**Professional Development  
 Committee**

Dwayne Bonnette, Battalion Chief

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

Lisa Jones, EMS Supervisor

Anthony Kelly, Firefighter

Chad Lallier, Firefighter

Doug McDaniel, Captain

Dan McMaster, Captain

Vernon Murphy, Firefighter

Rick Muse, Firefighter

Daryl Ross, Acting Battalion Chief

Donald Scott, Firefighter

Tony Washington, Captain

**Recruit School(s) Staff**

Byron Andrews, Captain

Tara Blunt, Firefighter

Patrick Evans, Firefighter

Michael Gerber, Paramedic

James Jackson, Firefighter

David Lukes, Firefighter

Patrick Lyon, Firefighter

Donald Scott, Firefighter

Congratulations to all our award  
 winners! 🎉